DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 147 250 SO 010 523

AUTHOR Hansen, Patricia; Guenther, John
TITLE Alternatives in Scheduling Patterns: Practitioner Implementation of Minicourse Programs in Selected Midwestern High Schools.
PUB DATE 26 Nov 77
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies (Cincinnati, Ohio, November 23-26, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; Curriculum Planning; Data Analysis; Decision Making; Educational Alternatives; *Educational Needs; Educational Objectives; Educational Philosophy; Educational Research; *Educational Trends; Flexible Scheduling; Literature Reviews; Program Attitudes; Relevance (Education); Schedule Modules; Secondary Education; *Short Courses; *Social Studies; *Surveys

ABSTRACT

The purposes of the document are to report on the status of social studies minicourse programs in selected midwestern high schools and to provide information to schools regarding obstacles to minicourses as alternatives to traditional programs. A 1976-77 survey of 265 midwestern high schools determined that only 60 (23%) of the schools offered minicourses in social studies, although advantages of minicourses have been confirmed by numerous educational studies. The document cites studies and articles which suggest that social studies is particularly adaptable to the minicourse approach due to the variety of cognitive and behavioral objectives generated by social studies emphases on citizenship development, interdisciplinary studies, global education, skill development, and social science education. As a follow-up to the 1976 survey, questionnaires were sent to schools which indicated they did not offer minicourses. The 141 responses identified major objections to minicourse programs. Objections included a preference for traditional academic programs, negative community attitudes, absence of perceived need, declining popularity, and especially, difficulties in implementing and managing the programs. Eight conclusions are offered, including minicourses have not substantially increased over the last five years in spite of perceived benefits. Although "Back-to-Basics" and general educational philosophical concerns mitigate somewhat against minicourses, these concerns were not perceived as important as programmatic obstacles. Tables of data and a definition of terms utilized in the analysis are presented. (Author/DB)

Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original.

ED147250

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"ALTERNATIVES IN SCHEDULING PATTERNS:

Practitioner Implementation of Minicourse Programs

In Selected Midwestern High Schools"

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Patricia Hansen

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A Symposium Paper

Presented At the Annual Meeting
National Council For the Social Studies
Cincinnati, Ohio, November 26, 1977

SO 010 523

Patricia Hansen, Assistant Instructor
John Guenther, Associate Professor

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
School of Education
The University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

In attempting to assess the nature and extent of existing and proposed social studies programs in public secondary schools, professional educators must address essentially two questions:

1. What is the current status of both traditional and alternative program patterns in existing high school programs?

2. What rationale is employed by practitioners when making decisions regarding the nature and extent of the particular program pattern to be operationalized in a specific curricular setting?

This paper will briefly react to the findings presented in response to the first question and, more specifically, will address the second question by presenting data from a related study designed to extract reasons identified by practitioners as to why or why not they consider(ed) minicourses as an alternative curricular and organizational approach in their social studies programs.

REACTIONS

Despite several studies verifying advantages and perceived benefits of minicourse programs, of the 265 schools surveyed only 60 (23%) are currently offering minicourse programs in the area of social studies. Although by no means an insignificant number, the results do not indicate large scale acceptance of minicourses as a strong alternative organizational approach in secondary social studies programs.

1. Research base supports advantages of implementing minicourse programs.

Over a period of the past five years numerous studies by the authors and others have been conducted to determine the rationale for and continuing status of minicourse programs as an alternative to traditional organizational patterns for high school course offerings. An initial study conducted by Guenther and

Ridgway in 1973 reported that principals in Kansas high schools with operational minicourse programs felt that the organizational procedure helped provide for a more humanistic school environment by:

1. Providing more options, greater curricular flexibility, and more varied experiences for students.
2. Making better utilization of staff strengths and interests.
3. Making it easier for students to work in their own area of interests and needs; thus, helping to individualize instruction.
4. Revitalizing student interest in certain subject areas--particularly the language arts and social studies.
5. Making it easier to offer more contemporary courses in various areas and add depth and comprehensiveness to the school program.
6. Aiding the failing student and lessening pupil-teacher conflicts.[1]

The principals were comparing traditional (semester/year) course offerings with minicourses; minicourses being defined, by the authors, as regularly-scheduled courses earning academic credit that are less-than-a-semester in length. Although the length of a minicourse may vary, the majority of them were offered for a nine-week period.

An extended study in 1974-1975 determined the extent of minicourse programs in three midwestern states.[2] Thirty-seven percent of the schools surveyed reported having minicourse programs; 27% were considering their adoption in the near future; 32% indicated that they did not plan to adopt minicourses; and 05% reported having dropped previously existing programs.

---

[1]Guenther, John and Robert Ridgway. "Mini-Courses: Promising Alternative in the Social Studies." The Clearing House. (April, 1973) pp. 40-43.

[2] . "Mini-Courses: One Way to Provide More Humanistic School Programs." The Principal's Bulletin. (April, 1976) pp. 12-15.

When asked to evaluate the success of their minicourse programs, 77% of the principals reported that their programs were very successful or successful. Only 0.5% felt that their program was somewhat successful, with 11% indicating they were undecided. The positive reactions of teachers and students to their minicourse programs were seen as being a significant contributor to this success; in the majority of schools minicourses were developed with input from students.[3] It was proposed by the authors of that study that since minicourse programs were specifically conceived to meet the needs and interests of students they should readily and effectively help realize the goals of humanistic school programs. These conclusions derive further support from the results of a study conducted by Roberts, Gable and Owen of the University of Connecticut. An evaluative study of selected cognitive and affective outcomes of students experiencing mini-course curricula as compared with those experiencing traditional curricula found that whereas student performances on the cognitive measures were relatively similar between both groups, in the affective area of reported student and teacher enjoyment the minicourse curriculum was found to be more successful and that the minicourse curriculum did not seem to limit growth in the cognitive areas of critical thinking and reading comprehension[4]--a frequent argument levied against minicourses and other curricular innovations, and a particularly significant one in the current era of increasing concern for basic skills and minimal competencies.

2. Contemporary general and social studies education concerns support minicourses. In the continuing era of educational concern for meeting individual

---

[3]Guenther and Ridgway. op. cit. p. 14.

[4]Roberts, Arthur D., Robert K. Gable and Steven V. Owen. "An Evaluation of Minicourse Curricula in Secondary Social Studies." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, New Orleans, March, 1975.

differences, student cultural and ethnic diversity, increased flexibility and student options, and the long-standing emphasis in social studies education upon citizenship development, interdisciplinary studies, concept and skill development, global education, and integrated behavioral science studies, among others, the needed variety and flexibility required to achieve these goals supports the notion of minicourses as one alternative to more rigid traditional programs.

3. Nature of social studies education lends itself to minicourse curricula.

The area of social studies education can be organized in a wide variety of ways other than the traditional semester or year-long "survey" courses required of all secondary students. Basic concepts, thematic units, practical skills, the humanities, varied learning experiences, valuing and moral development, differing resources, integrative studies, etc. are but a few of the numerous organizational and structural alternatives available to practitioners desiring to implement alternative or optional approaches to the social studies curriculum which can be readily be accommodated by minicourse programs.

4. YET, THE 1976-1977 MINICOURSE STUDY REVEALS:

A. A relatively small proportion of the schools surveyed have developed minicourse programs (38%); and an even smaller proportion have developed minicourse programs in social studies (23%).

B. Where minicourse programs have been implemented, the percentage of the total academic program's course offerings constituted by social studies increases from 12% in the traditional programs to 22% in the minicourse programs--a proportion more in keeping with the supposed importance to the total curriculum of the social studies area.

C. Increased comprehensiveness, breadth and depth in social studies programs can be achieved by minicourse programs, yet the course offering patterns still tend to follow traditional lines in social studies education rather than be used to introduce new content and skill areas and experiences into the curriculum.

D. Overall, in both traditional and minicourse programs, social studies course offerings reflect the traditional philosophy of social studies education enphasizing history and government while generally treating the other behavioral sciences rather incidentally.

Data gathered from the initial study does not provide evidence of substantial change in social studies programs either in content or in organizational patterns despite the continued emphasis in the professional social studies educational literature on alternatives, student- and concept-centered curricula, active student participation and decision-making, and individualized and varied learning experiences. Either these concerns are not shared or not known by attendance unit practitioners or other factors present in practitioner settings mitigate against their actualization in existing school programs. Obviously, minicourses alone cannot guarantee substantial changes in the nature or effectiveness of the social studies curriculum--that has been shown by the results of the survey of minicourse offerings; but their adoption may provide more of the flexibility in school programs needed to facilitate those changes. In order to more effectively facilitate minicourse programs in social studies, those factors--philosophical or other--need to be identified and addressed by social studies and curriculum professionals as all levels.

ALTERNATIVES IN SCHEDULING PATTERNS: PRACTITIONER IMPLEMENTATION OF MINICOURSE PROGRAMS

General Information

PURPOSE

The purpose of the study was to provide useful information to interested schools regarding problems with and obstacles to minicourse programs as a curri-

cular alternative to traditional programs, and to indicate an updated status report on minicourse programs either in operation or as planned by selected midwestern high schools.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the nature and frequency of recently developed minicourse programs according to subject areas and enrollment classification.
2. Identify the nature and frequency of minicourse programs planned for future implementation according to subject areas and enrollment classification.
3. Determine the most frequent reasons given by responding high school principals for discontinuing previous minicourse programs.
4. Determine the most frequent reasons given by responding high school principals for not planning to implement minicourse programs in the future.

SAMPLE

To gather the necessary data, a follow-up questionnaire was sent to all schools that did not, according to their course descriptions and enrollment guides, offer minicourses as identified by a companion study (For minicourse criteria, see page 2, paragraph 2.). Of the 165 questionnaires sent, 141 (85%) usable responses were returned. The responses of the principals indicated that an additional 29 schools said that they had developed minicourse programs in at least one area of which 13 were in social studies, and another 12 schools were planning to implement a minicourse program in the near future, of which three were to be in social studies. If their offerings constitute valid minicourse programs, this would indicate that, at most, 129 schools (49%) of the 265 surveyed were offering minicourses in one or more areas.* Generally, the

*Although some of the 29 respondents did send course descriptions, not all provided this information making it impossible to determine if their offerings actually met our definition for minicourses.

responses would indicate that as related to earlier studies, minicourse programs are possibly increasing in frequency of occurrence, or at least are continuing at approximately the same level.

STUDY PROCEDURES

Desiring preliminary data indicative of directions to follow regarding minicourse program development and retention, the researchers addressed two questions on the follow-up questionnaire which attempted to elicit principals' ideas regarding why they did not currently utilize a minicourse program in their schools. In addition to providing school enrollment* and organizational pattern data (9-12, 10-12, etc.), the respondents were asked to respond to one or more of the following items:

1. "We are currently offering minicourses. Subject areas:"
2. "We plan to offer minicourses. Subject areas:"
3. "We used to offer minicourses. Why were they discontinued?"
4. "We do not plan to offer minicourses. Why will they not be offered?"

As stated, a total of 141 (85%) usable returns were received. There was a total of 152 responses to the items reflecting some multiple item responding, most commonly to both items three and four.

The results of the responses to items one and two were described earlier. On responses to items three and four, categories of reasons were first listed as they emerged from the preliminary response analysis. Based on the emergent reasons, category constructs were developed to facilitate data analysis. The categories which emerged are as follows:

---

*Enrollment Classifications were: 1 = 0-150; 2 = 151-275; 3 = 276-400; 4 = 401-750; 5 = over 750.

REASONS CATEGORIES

STAFFING
SCHEDULING
PROGRAM DESIGN/ADMINISTRATION
TIME LIMITATIONS
"TOO SHORT"
INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION
"SMALLNESS" (of school)
PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY
NO PERCEIVED NEED
OTHER'S ADVICE/
NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE
BACK-TO-BASICS/ACADEMICS
QUESTIONABLE VALUE
PROBLEMS WITH STUDENTS
DECLINING POPULARITY
LACK OF INTEREST
FACILITIES/SPACE
BUDGET
COMMUNITY ATTITUDES
CONCERN FOR MEETING
STATE REQUIREMENTS

Construct descriptions of the categories used are provided in Appendix A.

Findings

Once the basic response categories were established, all responses to questions three and four were systematically analyzed and recorded according to the reasons given by enrollment classification as illustrated in Tables 1 and 2.

- - - -

provided no reasons but stated that they were not considering minicourses). The 192 reasons provided were consequently classified into 19 reason categories as shown in Table 2.*

Data Analysis and Interpretation

An earlier study indicated that 77% of the principals responding to an evaluative questionnaire felt that their minicourse programs were very successful or successful. In light of those results, the responses of the principals who have reported either discontinuing their minicourse programs or who do not plan to consider that curricular alternative and the large number of reasons they offer seems to raise some germane and unavoidable questions:

> Why is it that of 265 schools from 400 randomly selected high schools, 49% (at most) have minicourses to some extent? Why do the other 51% not have them, and of those who responded, 72% do not intend to consider their adoption?
>
> What is, if in fact there is, the common characteristic of nature of minicourse programs that causes them to be avoided by schools or to be so difficult to implement and effectively sustain as to be abandoned?

If a common impeding factor can be identified, what can we infer about program development research which can be used to facilitate acceptance and implementation of this and other alternatives to traditionally organized school programs?

Looking first to the possibility of the influence of contemporary pressure for basic education as a primary deterrent, one discovers that an

---

*No attempt was made to force reasons given into categories. The determinination of categories by collating similar responses into categories during the preliminary analysis created additional categories as needed for infrequent reasons.

examination of the data does not support this assumption. Less than 20% of the reasons given for discontinuing minicourse programs and only 15% of the reasons for not considering minicourses as offered by the respondents indicate concerns (as categorized under "Back-To-Basics"/Academics, Questionable Value, and Community Attitudes) which might reflect the pressures of the fundamentalist movement.

If we can reject, therefore, the assumption that the current basics movement and closely related factors do not constitute the primary force operating in opposition to minicourse programs, what other rationale can we reasonable discern as a potentially significant deterrent to this option?

Early analysis of the data revealed several impressions regarding the overall collective nature of the responses and emerging categories. A total of 19 separate categories were developed to provide comprehensive yet differentiated data analysis while maintaining manageable parameters for analysis.* Post-tabulation examination of response frequency distributions revealed patterns of clusters of responses and sets of more generalized groupings of of reasons. Two more clearly discernable overall classes of reasons reflect two aspects of educational thought and practice. The philosophical facet of curricular decision-making is reflected in the categories dealing with questions of the purposes and functions of education and what factors guide curriculum decisions on goals, programs, desired outcomes and like issues. Categories which reflect these concerns are "Back-To-Basics"/Academics,

---

*Ultimate classification decisions were made by the researchers based on their own study-developed conceptual constructs of the categories used and their introspective judgments of the provided responses both denotatively and contextually. As stated earlier, no attempt was made to force any response into presupposed categories. As much as possible the researchers tried to avoid prescribing their own expectations or presumptions upon the responses provided by the respondents.

Questionable Value, Program Philosophy, No Perceived Need, Declining Popularity, and Community Attitudes. These reasons collectively constitute only 17% (N=9) of the reasons stated for discontinuing minicourse programs and only 30% (N=58) of the reasons given for not considering minicourse programs.

The second general class of concerns reflected by the respondents' reasons appears to mirror the questions and problems we face in attempting to operationalize in real situations those philosophical decisions once we have made them--the development, implementation and management of programs which will actualize beliefs and priorities in education. These elements or concerns share the commonality of addressing basic programmatic realities.

Of the 19 categories which emerged from the data, 11 categories which can be classed as definitely programmatic in nature were as follows:

Scheduling	Facilities/Space
Staffing	Budget/Declining Enrollment
Program Design/Administration	"Smallness"
Insufficient Information	Not Enough Time For
Problems With Students	Concern For Meeting State
"Too Short"	Requirements

Additionally, if "Lack of Interest" reflects insufficient enrollment in a minicourse so as to not meet a certain required minimal level rather than actual disinterest in minicourses, it would be more programmatic than philosophical in nature thereby creating a twelth category. Resultantly, of 19 specific separate categories of reasons named for either discontinuing or not considering minicourse programs, at least 11 and perhaps 12 were basically programmatic, "how-to" in nature. Preliminarily, the problem appears to be more with managerial difficulties than with basic philosophic or value concerns.

Further study of the actual data distribution among the categories, both individually and collectively, supports this assumption. Analyzing the results

in Table 1 by categories, of a total of 52 reasons given, those reasons for discontinuing minicourse programs due to probably programmatic difficulties (f=42) constitute 82 percent of the total responses. (See Table 3). Second and third in frequency of mention were those reasons most definitely programmatic--scheduling and staffing--those practical concerns dealing with the mechanics of matching and facilitating efficient utilization of students, curricula, instructional experiences and all-too-limited human and physical resources. It was also interesting to note that only schools in Classification 5 (750+) did not mention those specific problems, perhaps reflecting some of the operational systems and support mechanisms more frequently available to large attendance units.

Analysis of responses to item four eliciting reasons for not considering minicourses reflects similar results. Of the 192 reasons given, 128 (67%) are potentially related to programmatic obstacles to successful implementation of innovative or diversified organizational approaches. (See Table 4). Although not so significant a proportion as in the reasons for the discontinuance of existing minicourse programs, it still suggests an influential force mitigating against this particular curricular alternative which must be purposefully and effectively addressed if programmatic changes are to be enabled in practical instructional settings.

Overall Conclusions

The comprehensive picture as presented by the data in this study would seem to support the following conclusions regarding minicourse program adoption and retention in a four-state midwestern area:

1. Although minicourse programs as an organizational alternative to traditional curriculum patterns have not decreased in a five-

year time period, neither have they substantially increased as shown in an expanded survey of numbers of schools and of geographic area.

2. This lack of increase has occurred in spite of a perceived beneficial effect of minicourse programs on both students and teachers as seen by practitioners and the existance of a high degree of success reported by those schools who have implemented them.

3. Contemporary pressures related to the "Back-To-Basics" or fundamentalist movement and current concern for quality of academic programs are not the primary factor mitigating against minicourses as an organizational alternative.

4. General educational philosophical concerns, while constituting a significant effect, also do not constitute the majority of reasons for discontinuing or not considering minicourse programs as an alternative to traditional program patterns.

5. Motivational factors affecting decisions to discontinue existing minicourse programs identified by practitioners who had abandoned programs were of a programmatic, administrative nature rather than of a philosophical or dissatisfactional nature by a substantial margin.

6. Determinant elements in practitioner decisions to not consider the adoption of minicourse programs as an alternative in existing programs were also predominantly related to programmatic concerns rather than philosophical or evaluative origins.

7. Of twelve programmatic obstacles to minicourses as an innovative approach to school programs delineated by practioners, the most consistently troublesome agents were related to organizational design, implementation, and day-to-day operation and management procedures. (Scheduling, staffing, and program design/administration) The practical mechanics of implementing and sustaining varied approaches mitigate against their consideration and retention.

8. If alternative approaches in school curriculum, program organization, and social studies and other subject area programs are to be realized and facilitated on the practitioner level, corresponding programmatic obstacles to those alternatives must be addressed and specific corresponding process procedures developed and disseminated to support those alternatives.

TABLE 1

REASONS FOR DISCONTINUING MINICOURSE PROGRAMS
BY ENROLLMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

REASON	CLASS. 1		CLASS. 2		CLASS. 3		CLASS. 4		CLASS. 5		TOTAL**	
	f	%*	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
LACK OF INTEREST	2	22	3	25	2	17	2	15	0	0	9	17
SCHEDULING	1	11	2	17	2	17	2	15	0	0	7	13
STAFFING	2	22	1	8	2	17	1	8	0	0	6	12
"BACK-TO-BASICS"/ ACADEMICS	0	0	2	17	2	17	0	0	1	17	5	10
PROG. DESIGN/ ADMINISTRATION	1	11	0	0	0	0	2	15	1	17	4	8
QUESTIONABLE VALUE	1	11	0	0	1	8	0	0	2	33	4	8
PROBLEMS WITH STUDENTS	0	0	2	17	0	0	1	8	1	17	4	8
BUDGET/DECL. ENROLLMENT	2	22	1	8	0	0	1	8	0	0	4	8
SPACE/FACILITIES/ TIME LIMITATIONS	0	0	0	0	1	8	3	23	0	0	4	8
"TOO SHORT"	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	1	17	2	4
OTHER+	0	0	1	8	1	8	1	8	0	0	3	6
TOTAL	9	17***	12	23	12	23	13	25	6	12	52	100+

*Frequency and percent of total reasons per classification.
**Frequency and percent of total reasons for all classifications. (N=30).
***Percent of all reasons (52) for each enrollment classification.
+For reasons of space and facilitating data presentation, two least mentioned reasons categories were combined: "Not Enough Variety" (which had only one response in both items so was deleted as a separate category), and "Insufficient Information" (N=2) which included 11 separate responses to Item 4.

TABLE 2

REASONS FOR NOT CONSIDERING MINICOURSES
BY ENROLLMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

REASONS	CLASS. 1 (N=14) f	%	CLASS. 2 (N=25) f	%	CLASS. 3 (N=10) f	%	CLASS. 4 (N=15) f	%	CLASS. 5 (N=17) f	%	TOTAL (N=81) f	%**
STAFFING	5	19	9	18	3	13	5	10	3	6	25	13
SCHEDULING	2	7	9	18	0	0	5	10	4	9	20	10
PROG. DESIGN/ ADMINISTRATION	1	4	4	8	0	0	6	12	7	15	18	9
QUESTIONABLE VALUE	1	4	1	2	6	25	4	8	6	13	18	8
PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY	1	4	4	8	2	8	3	6	5	11	15	8
NO PERCEIVED NEED	1	4	2	4	1	4	3	6	5	11	12	6
INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION	1	4	3	9	3	13	3	6	1	2	11	6
PROBLEMS WITH STUDENTS	2	7	1	2	0	0	3	6	4	9	10	5
"TOO SHORT"	0	0	3	9	2	8	0	0	5	11	10	5
FACILITIES/ SPACE	1	4	2	4	2	8	3	6	1	2	9	5
"BACK-TO-BASICS"/ ACADEMICS	0	0	1	2	1	4	5	10	2	4	9	5
BUDGET	3	11	2	4	1	4	0	0	0	0	6	3
"SMALLNESS"	3	11	2	4	1	4	0	0	0	0	6	3
OTHER'S ADVICE/ NEGATIVE EXPER.	1	4	2	4	1	4	2	4	0	0	6	3
LACK OF INTEREST	1	4	3	9	1	4	0	0	1	2	6	3
NOT ENOUGH TIME FOR	1	4	0	0	0	0	3	6	0	0	4	2
CONCERN FOR MEETING STATE REQUIREMENTS	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	3	2
DECLINING POPULARITY	1	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
COMMUNITY ATTITUDES	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	2	1
NO REASONS GIVEN	1	4	2	4	0	0	3	6	1	2	7	4
TOTAL	27	14***	54	27	24	12	50	25	47	24	199	100

*Frequency and percent of total reasons per classification.
**Frequency and percent of total reasons for all classifications. (N=81)
***Percent of all reasons (199) for each classification.

TABLE 3

PROGRAMMATIC REASONS FOR
DISCONTINUING MINICOURSE PROGRAMS
(N=30)

REASONS	f	%f*	%T**	REASONS (cont.)	f	%f	%T
LACK OF INTEREST	9	21	17	BUDGET/DECLINING ENROLLMENT	4	10	8
SCHEDULING	7	17	13				
STAFFING	6	14	12	SPACE/FACILITIES/ TIME LIMITATIONS	4	10	8
PROGRAM DESIGN/ ADMINISTRATION	4	10	8	"TOO SHORT"	2	5	4
PROBLEMS WITH STUDENTS	4	10	8	INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION	2	5	4
				TOTAL	42	100±	82

*Frequency and percent of all reasons given for all classifications for categories related to programmatic concerns. (N=42)

**Frequency and percent of total reasons given for all classifications in all categories as shown in Table 2. (N=52)

TABLE 4

PROGRAMMATIC REASONS FOR NOT CONSIDERING MINICOURSES

(N=51)

REASONS	f	%*	% T**	REASONS (cont.)	f	%	% T
STAFFING	25	20	13.0	FACILITIES/SPACE	9	7	4.7
SCHEDULING	20	16	10.4	BUDGET/DECLINING ENROLLMENT	6	5	3.1
PROG. DESIGN/ ADMINISTRATION	18	14	9.4	"SMALLNESS"	6	5	3.1
INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION	11	9	5.7	LACK OF INTEREST	6	5	3.1
				NOT ENOUGH TIME FOR	4	3	2.1
PROBLEMS WITH STUDENTS	10	8	5.2	CONCERN FOR MEETING STATE REQUIREMENTS	3	2	1.6
"TOO SHORT"	10	8	5.2				
				TOTAL	128	100+	66.7+

*Frequency and percent of all reasons given for all classifications for categories related to programmatic concerns. (N=128)

**Frequency and percent of total reasons given for all classifications for all categories as presented in Table 3. (N=192) NOTE: percentages given in "TOTAL" column in Table 3 are in proportion to all responses to Item 4. (N=199). Deleting the 7 "No Reasons Given" category results in an N=192 thus explaining discrepancies in percentages between the two tables.

Appendix A

"REASONS" CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

Following is a complete list of the categories developed from and utilized in the analysis and classification of the reasons given by the respondents for discontinuing or not considering minicourse programs. Each is followed by a brief construct description as conceptualized by the authors.

STAFFING -- insufficient staff size, preparation; problems in assignment, ability or desire to handle multiple or changing assignments.

SCHEDULING -- The mechanics of and difficulties with scheduling multiple offerings on a less-than-semester or year basis. (i.e., too complicated, takes too long, conflicts, etc.)

PROGRAM DESIGN/ADMINISTRATION -- lack of information about or perceived inability to design or administer a minicourse program adequately. Especially concerns about scope, sequence, structure, "coverage" or subject matter, organization, operationalization.

"BACK-TO-BASICS"/ACADEMICS -- concern that minicourse programs do not meet academic standards, do not adequately provide for education in basics. Idea that minicourses equal watered-down, "content-free" curricula.

QUESTIONABLE VALUE -- belief that minicourses aren't of much worth; that they are "fun and games" or purely interest oriented; that students do not gain worthwhile learning from them; or that they are too easy, too superficial and do not provide necessary information or skills for sound education.

PROBLEMS WITH STUDENTS -- difficulty keeping track of students (especially when using any form of variable or flexible scheduling); students take only easy courses; "fun' courses lead to students not being serious thus becoming discipline problems; students do not select well-rounded, academic curriculum.

TIME LIMITATIONS -- there is not adequate time in school year, semester, week, day, etc. to take time out of regular curriculum for or to schedule in an hour, 1-2 days or weeks, etc. for minicourses.

"TOO SHORT" -- 6, 9, or 12-week courses (or even semester courses) are too short to cover content, get to know students well enough, provide sufficient instruction in academic areas.

INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION -- either explicitly stated by respondent or implied by nature of answer that concept of minicourses as defined by the cover letters was not clear, or not enough was known about the idea and strategies to implement or maintain it.

"SMALLNESS" -- feeling that school size was too small to allow a minicourse program.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY -- district, principal, staff or any combination thereof do not believe in the minicourse concept or that it is appropriate to the school's goals and objectives or existing program.

NO PERCEIVED NEED -- do not believe or do not have information to indicate that students, staff, program, etc. need minicourses.

DECLINING POPULARITY -- belief that minicourses are "passe", on the way out, no longer accepted, not innovative in secondary school programs.

LACK OF INTEREST -- students, faculty, administration and combinations thereof are not interested or have not shown interest in minicourses or did not or will not sufficiently support a minicourse program.

FACILITIES/SPACE -- perception that the school or community had inadequate facilities (equipment, library and resources, supplies, etc.) and space (for learning experiences, student seating or activities, etc.) or both to support a minicourse program.

BUDGET -- financial limitations or decreased budget, often related to declining enrollments, would not allow support of a minicourse program.

OTHER'S ADVICE/NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE -- either other colleagues had advised against minicourses, principals had "heard" bad reports, counselors had advised against it, or they themselves had encountered negative experiences with minicourse (or "short course") programs.

CONCERN FOR MEETING STATE REQUIREMENTS -- a perception that minicourse programs could not meet state graduation or accreditation requirements. (For example, where a state requires three years, credits or "units" in English, two in social studies, etc.) Concern that 6-, 9-, or 12-week minicourse organization of subject matter could not fulfill those requirements.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES -- members of community, as perceived by respondent, do not or would not favor, understand, or support minicourse programs.